

The President's Daily Brief

21 April 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

21 April 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Influential elements in Phnom Penh have petitioned Cambodian Chief of State Cheng Heng to retain Lon Nol as prime minister. (Page 1)

[redacted] South Vietnam [redacted] Cambodia
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[redacted]
Nationalist China [redacted]
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The speech given by Fidel Castro on Monday night is discussed on Page 4.

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Ceylon. (Page 5)

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Communist China is expanding its launch complex at Wu-chai into a major missile rangehead. (Page 6)

South Korean President Pak is expected to win next week's election, but by a much narrower margin than in 1967. (Page 7)

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CAMBODIA

Influential elements in Phnom Penh, including a number of important military officers closely associated with Prime Minister Lon Nol's brother, Lon Non, have petitioned Chief of State Cheng Heng to retain Lon Nol. Among the petitioners was the chief of the capital's special military region and one field commander with troops in or near the city.

In apparent response to this pressure, Heng called off an address to the nation yesterday, during which he supposedly would have designated a new prime minister. He has asked National Assembly President In Tam to solicit Lon Nol's reaction to the petitions.

Senior military officers in Phnom Penh--including some who signed the petition--have told US officials that there is common agreement that Lon Nol must retire.

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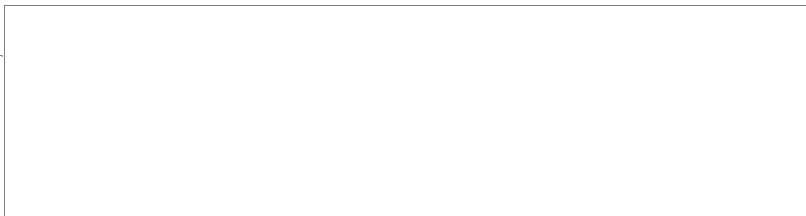
Lon Non has been convinced for some time that "royalist" elements would mount an effort to oust Lon Nol, and it is likely he views the events of the past few days as supporting his worst fears. Lon Nol's assertion on Monday that he has been "obliged" to resign--not, by implication, solely for reasons of poor health--will only increase Lon Non's reluctance to acquiesce in a political shakeup. He has in fact been assuring the press that his brother will remain as prime minister.

As for Lon Nol, although there have been signs that he no longer wants to play a major political role, he also is said to have told Lon Non that he was willing to continue to be prime minister if Cheng Heng did not accept his resignation.

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SOUTH VIETNAM - CAMBODIA



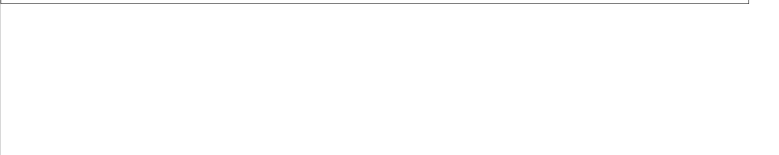
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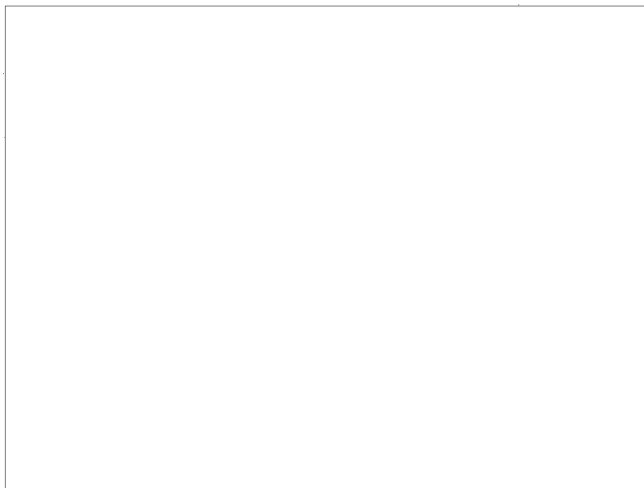
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NATIONALIST CHINA

on 10 April Chiang Kai-shek told a group of senior security officers that he would "certainly withdraw voluntarily" from the UN "if and when we are, or are about to be, deprived of our opportunity to fulfill our obligations." He said Taipei's membership was not important because the UN is a world organization in name only, and claimed that he had not withdrawn years ago only because of Nationalist obligations as a founding member.

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Chiang's decision to withdraw rather than face a humiliating expulsion or acquiesce in a compromise representation formula is not new. He threatened such action over a relatively minor issue in 1966, and his attitude almost certainly will not be modified in the face of a more serious challenge to Taipei's credentials this year. Chiang's restatement of his position on this matter will probably end discussion at lower levels of his government--which may have been undertaken without his authorization--about possible "compromises" on the UN issue.

Chiang is aware that the Nationalist position in the UN is growing more precarious as additional states recognize Peking and break relations with Taipei, and he appears to be personally preparing his government for a vote against Taipei in the General Assembly either this year or next. The Taipei press has also begun to disparage the importance of UN membership.

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CUBA

In a fiery speech Monday night, Fidel Castro concentrated on three major and oft-repeated themes: rejection of any reconciliation with the US; repudiation of the Organization of American States; and reaffirmation of support for "the revolutionary peoples of Latin America." The only significant departure from past statements on these themes was a considerable broadening of the definition of "revolutionary peoples" to include "revolutionary governments." Castro placed the present governments of Chile and Peru in this category. He also expressed satisfaction with political developments in Bolivia.

The absence of the usual buildup for the speech--Castro's first major foreign policy address in a year--suggests that it may have been scheduled hastily, perhaps because Castro felt obliged to respond to remarks on Cuba at the current OAS meeting. Castro, who views the trend of events in Latin America as shifting inexorably in his favor, can see no benefit to Cuba in returning to the OAS. Indeed, he said in his speech that the OAS should "disappear" and called for its replacement by a "union" of revolutionary Latin American states; presumably he sees himself as the leader of such a union.

Castro has not forsaken violent revolution, however, and regards it as essential in countries such as Brazil and Argentina.

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CEYLON

The Soviet airlift of military equipment to Ceylon began yesterday with the arrival of four AN-12 medium transports.

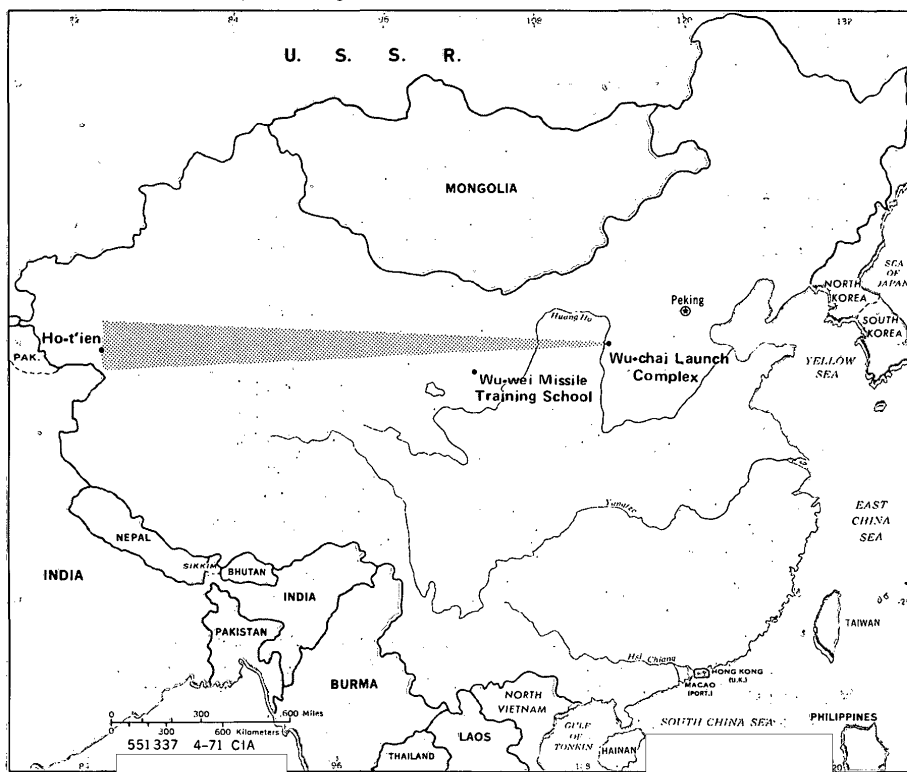
[REDACTED] The transports are bringing in a total of five MIG-17s and two KA-26 light helicopters--all to be flown by Soviet pilots--as well as maintenance equipment required to service the aircraft. Other military equipment may also be included in the shipments. The USSR has not previously provided military aid to Ceylon.

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There has been little further progress, meanwhile, in the government's campaign to put down the "Che Guevarist" insurgents. Security forces seem content to remain in static, defensive positions, and the insurgents appear to be avoiding major clashes.

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Wu-chai Launch Complex Being Expanded



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COMMUNIST CHINA

Satellite photography shows that the Wu-chai launch complex 200 nautical miles southwest of Peking is being expanded into a major missile rangehead. Construction is continuing on a second launch site--a silo--which may be completed this year. Near Wu-chai, three permanent instrumentation sites have now been identified.

The missile to be fired from the silo cannot be determined as yet.

The only missile system detected thus far in firings from Wu-chai has been an IRBM which has been launched several times from a surface pad to a 1,400-nm range. In November 1970, satellite photography of the Wu-wei missile training school showed that troop training on the IRBM had begun. This suggests that it could be ready for deployment late this year.

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A new airfield about 15 nm from the missile complex evidently is now ready to support missile operations. Ta-tung airfield--some 50 nm from the rangehead--has been performing this function.

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SOUTH KOREA

President Pak Chong-hui remains favored to win the election on 27 April, but observers in Seoul now believe that the outcome may be considerably closer than in 1967 when Pak led his closest rival by some one million votes out of 11,600,000 cast. Opposition candidate Kim Tae-chung is drawing overflow crowds in most cities; he is an effective orator and is willing to speak out on sensitive domestic and foreign policy issues. Seoul is generally conceded to him, as well as the populous southwest, his home region.

Many of those who relish hearing Kim tear into the administration may nevertheless prove reluctant on election day to risk trading the security Pak has provided for the untested abilities of Kim. This is especially true in the countryside, where Pak can already count on the pervasive government bureaucracy to deliver him votes. Pak also appears certain to get most of the large military vote. Moreover, government authorities have now generally succeeded in isolating student demonstrators from the election campaign, and students of at least one major Seoul university have called a moratorium on street demonstrations until after the election.

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